

VERSES

ON THE

CAMPAIGN.

LONDON:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR

1793.



TO THE READER.

THE mild and affectionate reign of His Majesty at home, and the military prowess of his Royal Sons abroad, place this country in a situation, without example, either in past or present times. For while Europe is at this moment all troubled and torn, Britain enjoys perfect security and quiet within. Nor does her various history exhibit a single record of three of her Royal Princes suffering at once all the dangers of war, and distinguishing themselves in the discharge of their duty, for the good of their country, and the welfare of Europe.—On these achievements the present Poem is founded.

TO THE

VERSES, &c.

To martial scenes, where royal blood
Flow'd for its King and Country's good,
Essay, O Muse, to tune thy lays,
Rouz'd by the dawn of Vict'ry's rays!

The distant din of doubtful war,
Whose trump first wak'd us from afar,
Near and more near with dread alarms
Approach'd, and lo, the foe in arms!
But Agincourt, that long had flow'd
With crimson streams of Gallic blood,
Our Britons with remembrance fir'd,
Our youth its feats again desir'd;
Our Princes too desir'd again
To act the scenes of Cressy's plain.

For succours loud the Belgians cry,
The * robber Gaul's approach was nigh,

* When the officers of Custine's army had been invited by the Prince of Nassau, and the servants were about to remove the plate after dinner, these gentlemen told them not to trouble themselves, and very considerably disembarassed them of it. At Frankfort, Mr. Custine thought it perfectly right not to remain empty handed; but even the National Assembly thought this wrong, and he was ordered to refund his spoils.

For though a gulph * betwixt them lay,
 He soon had pass'd this wat'ry way.
 His cannon's flash o'er Holland darts,
 At Hague its thunders shake their hearts,
 ——Lo Fred'rick comes——he calms their fears;
 Hush'd are their cries and dry'd their tears.
 The Gaul, impatient of his way,
 He sudden stops,—and holds at bay :
 And though unequal to a blow
 He scornful meditates the foe.

Thus when a Lioness assail'd
 By prowling monsters of the field
 With howlings rends the neighb'ring woods,
 Nor safety finds in wat'ry floods,
 Awaken'd by her piteous roar,
 The Lion moves along the shore,
 —Majestic in avenging rage:
 And dares the monsters to engage.
 But lo! though famish'd foul and wild,
 By courage damp'd, so great, so mild,
 They trembling fly in dire dismay
 Nor dare his royal rage essay.

At Brussels, the troops of Dumourier were forced to restore the plate which they had pillaged from the churches. And when they arrived at Meer Dyck, where the Duke of York, with a handful of Britons, stopped them from passing the Maese for three weeks, their leader was the sole man who paid the peasants during this time for what he consumed; the rest lived as free-booters.

* The river Maese; which had the French once crossed, nothing was to stop them to over-run all Holland, and possess themselves of the immense treasures of the bank of Amsterdam.

And, Famar! next I sing thy plain,
 Where many a father wept the slain,
 Though Vict'ry's torch, at Mercy's ray
 Illum'd, had gilt the Conq'ror's way.

Like to an Angel sent from heav'n,
 To whom the "high behest was giv'n,"
 To chastize for their impious plan
 A rebel race 'gainst God and man,
 Vengeance his arm, and fire his eye,
 Before Adolphus legions fly——
 When quick he spies with sudden glance,
 Where, torrent-like, his hosts advance,
 A Gallic soldier vanquish'd lie,
 —His posture pray'r, and dread his eye;
 With arm uplift the sabre fell
 Had sent the rebel soul to hell;——
 —But Mercy, attribute of God
 That beams upon his chast'ning rod,
 Adolphus touch'd——he onward drove,
 Proclaiming, as from heav'n above,
 Grace to the guilty,——grace he cry'd,
 And at the voice, as petrify'd
 High in suspense the sabre stood.
 Foul evil to repay with good,
 The Prince his saving order gave,
 And snatch'd a traitor from the grave.

Valenciennes! now the Muse would raise
 Her voice amidst thy bloody bays,

Which tow'ring round thy ramparts grow,
 Rear'd to many a gallant foe :
 But numbers which to them belong,
 Surpass the limits of her song.
 Yet proud, young Tollemache, of thy fame,
 Friendship in tears repeats thy name ;
 She bids the Muse thy mem'ry save,
 And plants a laurel on thy grave.

But high on record let it dwell!
 (And well the tale might Homer tell) :
 Would that some Muse, in epic song
 The deed to distant times prolong
 On massive brass, or sacred stone,
 —*To Britain's Royal Son alone*
Valenciennes would a captive be ;—
 Soldiers, citizens, all agree
 That else, the spires which mount on high
 Should all in smoking ruins lie,
 And universal chaos fall
 Within th' embraces of their wall.
 Hear it, ye Britons, and rejoice!
 'Tis a proud foe's approving voice,
 A jealous Gaul's, whose rival fame
 Immortal stamps Great Britain's name.

And great the meed to Fred'rick due!
 Nor dare a feeble Muse pursue
 The various conflict of his soul,
 Where all the swells of passion roll

As he approach'd thy turfy tomb,
 All wrapt, great * Rebel, in thy doom
 Arriv'd—ensues a silent pause.
 —But last his mind surveys thy cause,
 Where guilt on guilt to station climbs,
 And falls a victim to its crimes.
 Aside he turn'd—and troubled stood
 A monument of feeling mood.
 Again he turn'd, and cast his eyes
 Where the proud rebel humbled lies,
 And order'd strict, with martial trust,
 Sacred to hold the warrior dust
 From insult, scandal, more secur'd
 Than if in holy piles immur'd.
 And much this mournful interview
 On Britain highest honours drew.
 A heart so gen'rous, and so brave,
 That consecrated e'en the grave,
 That grave—a foe's!—by meeds of praise
 Is crown'd beyond his conqu'ring bays,
 On every Gallic tongue it grew,
 In e'en their † Pandemonium too!

* General Dampier, slain at the taking of Famar, by a shot from an Hanoverian cannon.

† The French were uneasy after the taking of Famar, lest some insult should be offered to the ashes of Dampier, who was buried in the camp. It was proposed, therefore, in the National Assembly, that a deputation should be sent to the Duke of York, requesting him to protect the body for them, as they hoped to deposite it, on a future day, in their Pantheon. But before the question was debated, the deed was done. The Duke of York had already stationed two centinels on the grave to protect it from insult;—the effect of this generosity on the French was incredible.

And hence when various hosts engage
 With thund'ring peals, and fiery rage,
 Valenciennes walls, the Gauls demand
 Their chains from gen'rous Fred'rick's hand,
 That Britain's flag alone should fly
 And bear her triumph to the sky.

But Ernest! can the Muse rehearse,
 In artless strains of humble verse,
 The martial ardour of thy breast,
 Where virtue's flames transcend the rest!
 Borne on his steed across the plain,
 While reeking streams his footsteps stain,
 He dares the fight where thousands die,
 And mingling hosts in carnage lie.
 But well our warrior mark'd the foe,
 Whose sabre aim'd a deadly blow;
 The coward, stricken ere he flies,
 Falls at his* royal feet, and dies!—
 Another yet, with Gallic hate,
 Press'd on the Prince, and touch'd on fate;
 Wounded he sunk, in vanquish'd shame,
 To add new trophies to thy name.
 Thus when a fearless stag is found
 By hunters, and half-circled round,

* Prince Ernest was nearly surrounded by the enemy at Lincelles, one of whom rushed on him; but fell directly: and then another followed, whom the Prince wounded with his second pistol.

Wild clamour quick the welkin fills,
 —The leader he, indignant, kills.
 Another now his fury tries,
 —Another, and another dies,
 Till all amaz'd, in quick dismay
 They quit the field, and leave the prey.

But Gauls ungrateful! you alone,
 Now by crimes illustrious grown,
 Beneath th' inglorious mask of art,
 Could aim destruction at that heart,
 Which late at Famar nobly swell'd,
 And instant death from Gauls repell'd.
 As Judas, who, for love of lore,
 The Saviour whom he should adore,
 With trait'rous kiss betray'd to blood,
 Yes! you alone! had thus imbru'd
 Your guilty hands, perfidious foe!
 In friendship's form * you launch'd the blow!
 Adolphus fell,—but soon his hands,
 Furious, snatch'd him from your hands.
 Thus had a Tiger, with fell art,
 A victim seiz'd, whose tender heart

* During the affair of Rexpoede, Prince Adolphus was accosted by an Hussar in German; the Prince replied in the same language, supposing he was one of the Allies; but the traitor having thus deceived the Prince, and put him off his guard, profited of his opportunity, and levelled at him a blow of his sabre. The Prince fell,—his sword was in the possession of the enemy; but, notwithstanding this, one of the French soldiers cut at him again as his back was turned, and wounded him across the shoulder.

[12]

With savage thirst he hastes to tear;
— But sudden thunders shake the air,
The bolts of heav'n, in forked fire
Descend, and double dread inspire;
Alarm'd, the victim lifts his head
——Lo! at his feet the Monster dead!

THE END.